

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

Reference Guide: Fishing Contests

Authority: 87-3-121, MCA; 12.7.801 – 12.7.809, ARM; Parks Biennial Commission Fee Rule

Thank you for your interest in conducting a fishing contest in Montana. This reference guide provides information on the rules pertaining to fishing contests and the permitting process. Please review this information and submit a completed Fishing Contest Permit Application by the applicable deadline. For additional information please phone (406) 444 - 7319 or email npodolinsky@mt.gov.

PART I. PERMIT REQUIREMENTS

A fishing contest is any event, contest, derby, or tournament where an entry fee is charged or where people may win prizes or cash for catching fish in Montana. FWP requires a permit to conduct a fishing contest in Montana. *Exception:* Fishing contests that do not use FWP sites and involve fewer than 30 people with cash prizes or merchandise worth \$500 or less do not require a permit but must comply with all fishing contest regulations. The Fisheries Bureau and Parks Division both have permitting requirements for fishing contests. The Fisheries Bureau manages the fisheries and the Parks Division manages the FWP sites. In the interest of simplification, the department combined the permitting process. The terms and conditions of the permit will vary depending on the location of the contest, the number of participants, and whether FWP access sites are involved. Please Note: No contests will be permitted for holiday weekends, and no contests are allowed involving any Montana listed species of special concern or for wild trout in rivers or streams.

PART II. PERMIT APPLICATION PROCESS

The contest organizer must submit a Fishing Contest Permit Application to: Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks, Attn: Fishing Contest Permit Application, 1420 East 6th Avenue, Helena, MT 59620-0701. Upon receiving a completed application the fisheries and parks staff will evaluate the proposed event and identify terms and conditions for the permit. FWP will give public notice of all contests and provide an opportunity for public comment on each application.

PART III. PERMIT FEES

In accordance with the Parks Biennial Fee Rule, the contest organizer must pay a permit fee of \$3 per participant if the contest will include 30 or more people and utilize a FWP fishing access site or state park. The fee is used to offset the cost of administering the event, including but not limited to site clean-up, latrine pumping, road plowing and maintenance, event monitoring, and permit administration. FWP may adjust this fee on a case-by-case basis. Examples that may warrant a fee reduction include contests that are organized primarily for children under the age of thirteen, contests conducted by nonprofit organizations, and contests when proceeds are donated to a nonprofit organization, a charitable cause, or the maintenance, management, or improvement of FWP sites. The contest organizer is responsible for submitting all owed fees within 30 days after the conclusion of the contest. Organizers will receive a Payment Form with their permit. Failure to comply may result in a \$50 late payment penalty, citation, and loss of future privileges.

IMPORTANT DATES

- Applications must be submitted between May 1 & July 1 for **winter ice-fishing** contests (12/1 – 3/1).
- Applications must be submitted between September 1 & November 1 for **open-water** contests (3/1 – 12/1).
- Late Applications WILL NOT be accepted except on a case-by-case basis for benefit fundraising contests.